

b.) Remarks

Claim 1 has been amended to correct a typographical error and for better idiomatic usage or conformity with U.S. practice. No new matter has been added.

The Examiner has objected to claim 1 for the formal reasons noted. In response, claim 1 has been amended in conformity with the Examiner's kind suggestion.

Claims 1, 6 and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over McGaffigan (WO 98/53348) in view of Bradshaw (EP 0 333 502). The Examiner's bases of rejection is set forth in paragraphs 3 and 4 at page 2 of the Office Action. The remaining claims stand rejected over this art with various tertiary references as discussed at pages 3 and 4 of the Office Action.

Basically, the Examiner states McGaffigan teaches an apparatus with a retroreflective part on a back of a plurality of prismatic retroreflective elements having no bonded area with other layers. As to Bradshaw, such is cited for showing an internally illuminated retroreflective sign.

In McGaffigan, however, the prismatic retroreflective part is located only at the end portion on the side opposite to the light source. In McGaffigan, the "retroreflective part" is only the retroreflective end portions, i.e., the portions indicated as "103" in Fig. 9A or "107" in Fig. 9B. That is to say, all of McGaffigan Figs. 1, 2, 8, 13 and 22 show only trigonal (triangular) prisms which do not retroreflect. In other words, McGaffigan's "prismatic elements" do not retroreflect and McGaffigan does not retroreflect "light coming from the front of said sign" (claim 1, line 3), but only retroreflects light coming from the internal light source.

In contrast, the present invention retroreflects light coming from the front of the sign. This salient feature clearly distinguishes the present invention from McGaffigan and provides an advantage that the information display section has good visibility.

Furthermore, McGaffigan teaches only backs of the prismatic elements have no bonded area with other layers, but does not teach or suggest that the retroreflecting part of the prismatic retroreflective elements has no bonded area with other layers.

This deficiency at least is not overcome by Bradshaw's retroreflective internally illuminated sign in which the retroreflective part on the back of retroreflective elements is bonded with other layers.

Accordingly, even if Bradshaw's retroreflective elements were combined with the teachings of McGaffigan, such still would not provide a retroreflective, internally illuminated sign which "retroreflects light coming from the front of said sign" (claim 1, line 3) and "the retroreflective part on the back of said prismatic retroreflective elements forming said continuous retroreflective plane having no area bonded to other layers" (claim 1, last four lines). Nor would such combination provide an information display section with the exceptional visibility achieved by the present invention, as discussed at specification page 11, lines 9-12.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that all of the Examiner's concerns are now overcome and the claims are now in allowable condition. Accordingly, reconsideration and allowance of this application is earnestly solicited.

Claims 1-9 remain presented for continued prosecution.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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